2/20/72

Dear Js, as you have probably realized, not knowing whether or not it would interest you, in some cases I make an extra carbon FYI. I now find that I am having to restrict what was my customary distributions because of serious dvisions in the once-critical community, now seriously reduced to fewer than a handful doing any meaningful work. The dead, ambitious had of the past inhibits too much still, for with time and changes, what was ture five years ago is not today, with approcahes, means, etc. Anyway, I'm making a few notes for the Epilogue and I think they may interest. I have only the one cassette machine so I've made no dubs. In at least one case, I presume because of a too-loose or too-tight reel, a reel-to-reel tape is wrong speed. Do you have a variable-speed machine?

Selection

Lattimer of Lattimer alone is more or less of a mystery, if my analysis is correct, less. He had had no connection of any kind with any Kennedy (this he personally describes as a happy condition) or with Marshall. Thus he is at a loss to explain his slection excet in terms of exalted self-concept: he alone had done significant experimentation, which is as significant and relevant as masturbation. He has never done more than squeeze and shave bullets, which could not begin to have relevance save with the establishing of the use of precisely this kind of bullet, something not done and not probable. He says this was probably the basis for selecting him because all the others had done no more than sit on their butts. Rather an odd view for a lab man, no?

He has completely changed his story on the neck wound without realising it, now saying that the text of the Report is precisely correct but the sketches only are wrong. He says it was not possible to make measurements on the pictures, which were not to scale (but Fisher has told me they do), and he has mixed up what he claims to have seen with what he has selected from the testimony, fortunately erroneous testimony if he cites it accurately, an assumption his record does not warrant. For example, he gives the length of the incision in the anterior neck when there is no picture of it(!) and the width of the opening from the incision, while saying the pictures give no scale. He conjectures with certainty that the anterior neck skin was restrained by the (also certain) exiting bullet by the cloth of the collar. He confirms that the head entry wound was "considerably" higher but fails to see its refutation of the official mythology. In fact, he says he is certain of the accuracy of the autopsy measurements on the rear non fatal of which he allegedly could make no measurements yet from the panel's examination of the same film they correct one of these measurements. Farout stuff.

Mots interesting of all, since I have been trying to puzzle out the basis of his selection, is his giving of the unfootnoted source of his "sophisticated observers" jazz. That turns out to be himself, in the plural. Modesty, thy name is Lattimer! And the other Bircher rehtoric? Refs. to the Cuban situation, naturally! Love that Lattimer!

FWI: you can understand I am working by indicertion I'l probably not disclose in the epilogue, for it may continue after I write this. And others things will eventuate. He made the mistake of putting the wrong person on, and the cooling of the Hughes flap will have him helping again.

I am now satisfied that my original hunch is accurate, that the selection was made for Marshall by those he thought he could trust, as was the decision, probably in the form of a recommendation.

Meanwhile, another potential problem looms: Graham is now a bit disturbed that Wecht has had no answer and is thinking of doing a followup.

Aside from all other considerations, there is a simple and comprehensible of Lattimer's intellectual capacity, scientific competence and basic honesty: he is form is saying that it is beyong dispute that the exiting bullet went through the shirt. The slits there, from whatever cause, exactly overlap, although they are not otherwise identical, and below the collar-button. In the very center. This means that there must be a hole through the tie. He has seen the tie and knows there is no hole in it. He also knows that it is no longer in its original condition.

Meanwhile, telling me his writing on this is far in the future, he and his sons are working on more crap on what they call the ballistics, for April publication in a minor medical journal. He loves sycophants, and he will find plenty of them, as by now I am sure you have imagined.

But one of the troubling things is the continue refusal, not failure, of the senior former critics and those of present ambition to give any thought to what is involved. Not to me, SM says my concern is preposterous and ridiculous.